383 and later to be provided by the people themselves. This idea was
654 taken up by the villagers and the first bush rubber processed at Ombi-Tara was purchased by the Department of Agriculture on 5 June 1964.

[439] An Agricultural Assistant was stationed full time at Ombi-Tara and he helps to grade, weigh and bale the rubber.[1] The baled rubber is purchased monthly by an Agricultural Officer who drives to Ombi-Tara from Popondetta. It is marketed in Australia through the Papuan Rubber Pool.

249 Tapping is organised on a rotation system, with one man tapping
434 the bush rubber stand each month, producing between 70 and 200 lb of Ribbed Smoked Sheet, and earning between $12 and $34, depending of his diligence and the price of rubber.

383 In mid 1964 the villagers built a smoke house, a machine house
474 and a baling house, all of local materials, for the equipment on loan from the Department of Agriculture. The baling press was
[654] provided on permanent loan by a local planter.

[402] On 27 October 1964 an Ombi-Tara Village Savings Account was
[454] opened at a bank in Popondetta with the sum of $227.50. During the following year money was paid in at irregular intervals at an average rate of about $14 per month.

On 12 February 1965 the Ombi-Tara people paid $177.72 for their own rollers and coagulating pans which they now use for processing, leaving the Department of Agriculture free to transfer its equipment to another recently initiated scheme. Extra coagulating pans were bought for $91.20 on 16 October 1965, leaving a balance of $117.84 in the village account.

[651] No deposits were made between October 1965 and the end of January 1966 because of the need to save money to pay the Local Government Council tax ($5 per man) and the Mission jubilee contribution ($2 per householder).

243 While the bush rubber processing project appears to have been a
[797] success, almost every other attempt made by the Ombi-Tara people at planting cash crops has failed. They participated in a communal rice growing project in 1950, encouraged by the Anglican Mission, but it was a failure, as were similar projects in other parts of
245 the district. Later in the 1950s a communal cocoa plantation of
[654] some 400 trees was established with Administration encouragement. Disputes over the organisation of work and the distribution of proceeds caused the abandonment of the project shortly afterwards.[2]

[1] During our stay all rubber processed at Ombi-Tara was graded Ribbed Smoked Sheet No.2.

[2] On the communal rice and cocoa experiments in the Northern District see Crocombe 1964a:29-33.